West Dunbartonshire CVS

This submission is made by West Dunbartonshire CVS, The Third Sector Interface in the West Dunbartonshire local authority area.

The publication of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Act (Scotland) 2014 facilitated a further development of integration arrangements in West Dunbartonshire, building on the approach commenced in 2010. Throughout this evolutionary process, engagement with the community and Third Sector has been open, consistent and positive.

Questions:

Q: Do you know how and when you can get involved with IA to influence decision making?

In preparation for the establishment of the IA in 2015, two distinct but connected processes were undertaken around community and third sector participation and engagement moving forward. In late 2014, West Dunbartonshire CVS were commissioned by the WDCHCP of the time to undertake a community engagement review. This included consideration of public experience of the Public Partnership Forum (PPF) model and mapping of the other engagement groupings available. The review led to the development of Local Engagement Networks (LENs) which allow for both targeted and general engagement across both defined localities. The LENs are chaired by two elected community representatives and supported by WDHSCP and WDCVS in a partnership approach. Development of the LENs model is ongoing with an annual plan being developed to ensure that visibility is high and that a breadth of issues and interests which impact on the work of the IA are discussed and consulted on. Both of the LENs Chairs occupy seats on the IJB, allowing the LENS agendas to be directly taken to the discussion tables.

Third Sector engagement is taken forward based on a structured engagement approach. This allows local organisations to annually identify their engagement priorities across a range of community planning themes. Engagement is via targeted mailings and includes regular sharing of WDHSCP information including the IJB Agenda and supporting paperwork. This sector facilitation role has recently been included in a partnership agreement between WDCVS and WDHSCP; formalising the way in which we work together in the future. WDCVS as the Third Sector interface also has a seat on the IJB.

Q: Were you consulted in the preparation of Strategic Plans?

Two strategic plans have been published since the IA was formed, a one year 2015-16 plan and the successor 2016-19 plan. Third sector consultation on both of these plans was facilitated by West Dunbartonshire CVS with feedback supplied to the IA in the form of collated consultation responses.
Q: Have you been involved with the work of the localities?

Two locality group are operational in West Dunbartonshire – Clydebank and Dumbarton & The Vale of Leven – each representing around 50% of the local population. Both West Dunbartonshire CVS and the LENs networks have been engaged in aspects of the localities work during the last year. For example in Clydebank, a strand of activity has included taking forward potential developments in the provision of community mental health services. LENs network meetings have taken place giving insight from a breadth of community members and patients around the services and have helped to develop some new approach such as reviewing appointment times and increasing public information sharing. LENs and Third sector information is routinely shared at the locality meetings to ensure that connectivity.

In the Dumbarton locality, a strand of activity has included taking forward work in relation to improving results for patients living with COPD. West Dunbartonshire CVS serves on the short life working group alongside the British Lung Foundation ensuring that third sector contributions can be maximised for patient benefit. Again, LENs meetings have taken place in support of this key area of activity, focusing on COPD related issues such as increasing the uptake of pulmonary rehab classes and the result of this have been fed into the working group and locality meetings.

Q: Do you think that your involvement has had an impact on decision making?

Inclusion in both the locality and the IJB structures has facilitated community and third sector engagement within the IA. Both structures remain early in their life cycle and as such it is difficult to assess degrees of impact, however experience to date has shown that input has been welcomed (and at times requested) in all debate and decision making.

Q: What could be done to improve the communication, collaboration and engagement?

The publication of the Participation and Engagement strategy has been a positive first step in this process. This strategy has been shared with both the community and Third Sectors and together with the commitment to positive engagement contained with the WDHSCP/WDCVS Partnership Agreement provides a solid foundation to improve two-way communication moving forward including increased activity via the WDHSCP website, regular targeted e-bulletin publications by the IA and the LENs, and increased use of social media - all of which will help to increase activity within the LENs.